



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Troubles in the Church, South Hadley Falls.

1863 .

1345G
10



CS 13456.10

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
(CLASS OF 1882)
OF NEW YORK

1918

MS. 73456.1
A STATEMENT OF FACTS,

CONCERNING THE

Troubles in the Church,

IN

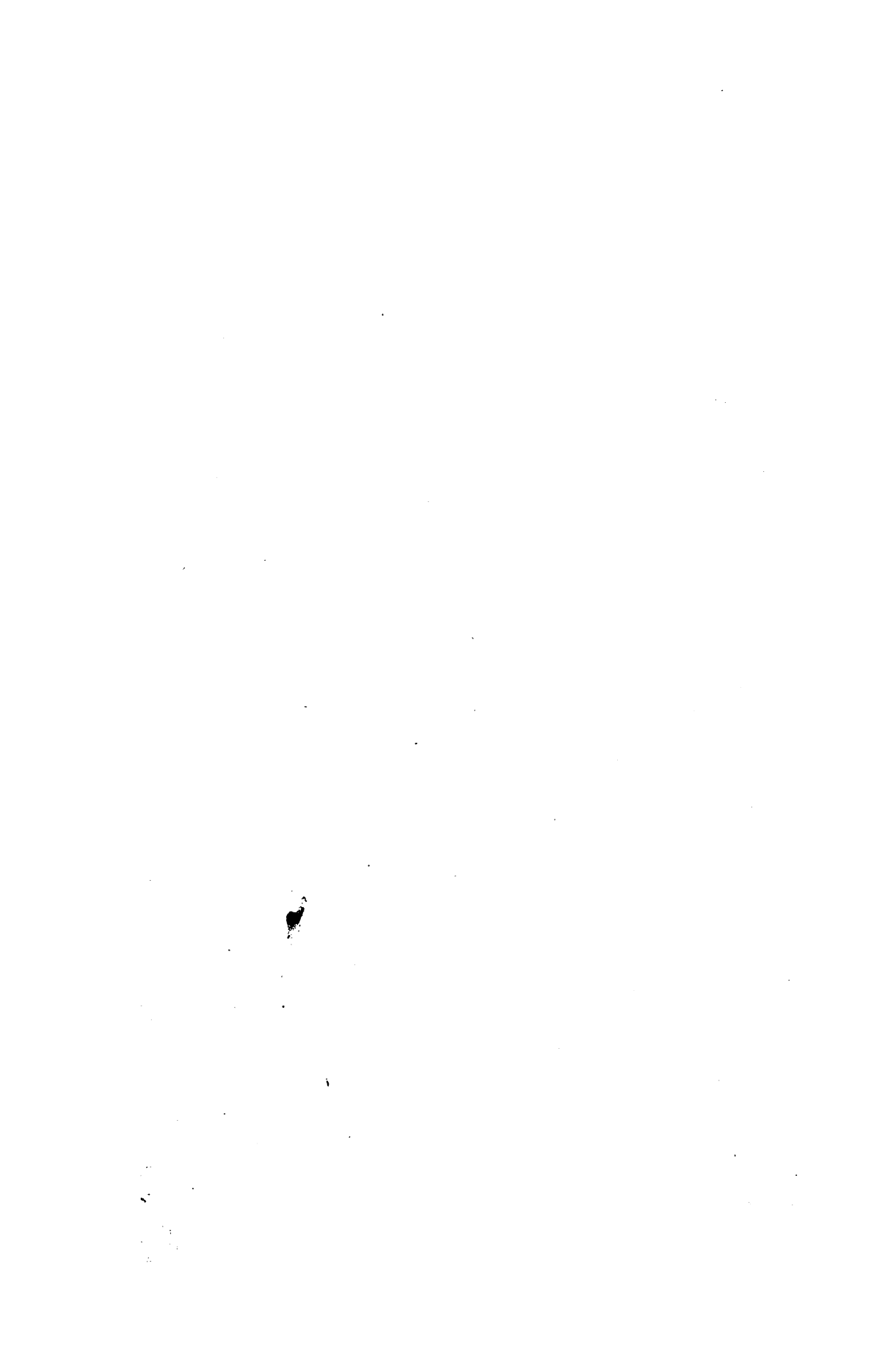
SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, MASS.

CURTIS STEDD-

JAMES DOWDE AND COMPANY, PRINTERS

1890.







Thos. Chubbuck Lith. Springfield Mass.

Yours sincerely

Rich^d Knight.

Pastor of the First Congregational Church,
SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, MASS.

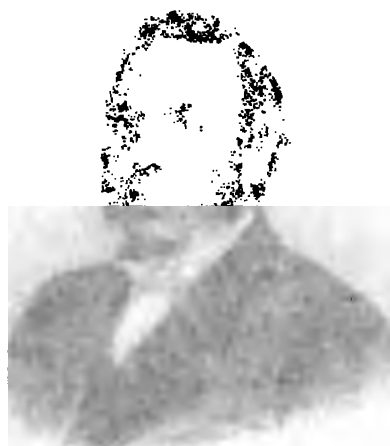
0

A STATEMENT OF FACTS,

,

.

1



...and the

A STATEMENT OF FACTS,

CONCERNING THE

Troubles in the Church,

IN

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, MASS.



SPRINGFIELD:
SAMUEL BOWLES AND COMPANY, PRINTERS.
1863.

0. 13456.10

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRA.
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

South American, etc. etc. A. J. C.

STATEMENT.

THE troubles in the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls have been made the subject of so much observation, and have generally been so much misrepresented and misunderstood, that it is high time the churches around, and the public generally, should know something from an authentic and reliable source as to their real history.

It is due also to those ministers and friends who have so nobly stood by us throughout our trials, that we should supply them with proof such as shall satisfy them that they have, in so doing, been the upholders of truth and uprightness.

It is likewise due to those who may form the church when the present generation has passed away, to leave them some account of its difficulties, that they may know how much has been suffered by their predecessors in the defence of the truth as it is in Jesus, and of the pure principles and polity of Congregationalism.

The "First Congregational Church, in South Hadley Falls," therefore, now puts forth this plain statement of facts, that it may be understood by all who are willing to be informed, that a deep wrong has been committed against it; and that all the measures which have been adopted to cause its downfall, have been based upon the fraud and falsehood of a few unscrupulous men.

We enter into no vindication, we use no special pleading, we simply stand upon righteousness, and truth, and justice; and from this foundation all the *ex parte* councils in the world can never move us.

The *apparent* commencement of the troubles was on this wise: Our pastor, Rev. R. Knight, had been much grieved for some time, by the endeavors of the chorister to sift into the minds of some of the young people of the congregation, very pernicious doctrines; and was very much rejoiced when said chorister told him on Saturday, October 15, 1859, that the next Sabbath would be the last of

his exercises unless the Society would pay him for his services. The pastor informed the chairman of the Parish Committee of this resolve of the chorister, and he too very greatly rejoiced, that without trouble a long desired object was about to be accomplished, and that the incongruity would no longer exist, of one end of the meeting house contradicting the other. Another chorister was therefore temporarily engaged for the following Sabbath; but when this was discovered, certain disaffected men immediately prevailed upon the former chorister to stand his ground, and retain his position in spite of the known wishes of both pastor and committee. It was now plain that when the Sabbath came there would be a collision if the usual services were proceeded with; and therefore for the sake of peace, and a proper regard for the sanctity of the Lord's house, the chairman of the committee requested the pastor not to give out any hymns at all; dispensing with that part of the worship simply because of the determination of these men to cause a disturbance in the sanctuary.

Upon this non-reading of the hymns was afterwards based nearly all the factious opposition under which our pastor had to labor, although he acted under the direction of the chairman of the Parish Committee. And at subsequent church meetings Mr. K. was accused of bullying—gagging—popery—John Bull tyranny—and also of falsehood. Many such charges, and elegant phrases and epithets were again and again made against and applied to him. At a meeting of the church held November 2, 1859, after a great deal of this kind of abuse the church voted by ballot, 47 to 1, that it had the fullest "confidence in the integrity and truthfulness of the pastor." Before the vote was taken some eight or ten of the opposers left the meeting. Notwithstanding this expression of confidence, however, the opposition and abuse from the disaffected party became so great that the pastor by the advice of friends, asked the church to unite with him in calling an Ecclesiastical Council, to advise what course should be pursued under the circumstances. That council was held on November 29, 1859, and the following is the official report of its doings:

"Pursuant to letters missive from the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls, an Ecclesiastical Council convened at the meeting house in that place, Tuesday, November 29th, 1859, at ten o'clock, A. M.

The Council was organized by the choice of Rev. Dr. Vaill as Moderator, and Rev. H. M. Parsons as Scribe.

The following brethren presented credentials as Delegates from the churches invited:

	Pastor.	Delegate.
Palmer 2d,	Rev. Dr. Vaill,	Bro. William Holbrook.
Springfield 1st,	Rev. H. M. Parsons,	Bro. W. B. Calhoun.
Monson,	Rev. T. G. Colton,	Dea. Marcus Chapin.
Chicopee 1st,	Rev. E. B. Clark,	Dea. Giles S. Chapin.
Chicopee 3d,	Rev. C. H. Cone,	Dea. C. M. Kendall.
Warren,	Rev. S. S. Smith,	
Holyoke 2d,	Rev. J. B. R. Walker,	Bro. E. G. Pierce.
Granby,	Rev. H. Mills,	Bro. Percy Cook.

Prayer by the Moderator.

The letter stating the object for which the council was called was then read, viz:—"A mutual council, to advise respecting the following matters, viz:—The pastor's conduct in reference to the singing; and the gross abuse heaped upon the pastor by a member of the church in consequence thereof, and such other incidental matters as may grow out of these main points of difficulty between us."

On the call of the Moderator, Deacon Bardwell responded as the "member of the church" alluded to in the matters submitted for the advice of the council—and presented a petition to the council praying that in justice to himself, Mr. Edward P. Gillett might be admitted as his council.

Rev. Mr. Cone moved—and it was *voted* by the council—that the statements of the pastor be heard before action on this petition.

Rev. Mr. Knight was then heard in relation to his conduct in reference to the singing, and the abuse heaped upon him by Deacon Bardwell.

Voted—to hear the statement of Deacon Bardwell concerning the matters at issue.

Voted—to adjourn till two o'clock and then resume the statement of Deacon Bardwell.

Council met at two o'clock and Deacon Bardwell resumed his statement.

The committee of the church were then invited to make their statement.

Voted—that the society's committee make such statements as they have in their knowledge.

All the parties having been heard,—*Voted*—that the council be by themselves. *Voted*—that Brother Clark, Brother Calhoun and the scribe, be a committee to draft and present the decision of council. After recess the committee reported the following decision :

WHEREAS, the pastor's conduct in reference to the singing has been the cause of grievance to some in the church ; and, *whereas*, one member in his language concerning the pastor is thought by him grossly to have abused him,

Resolved, 1st. Although the frank and impulsive nature of Rev. Richard Knight, may have led him to some indiscreet expressions, yet we feel that his character as a sound preacher, faithful pastor, true Christian and honest man is fully sustained by this investigation.

In relation to his conduct about the singing, we find that he followed implicitly the direction of the society's committee, and was influenced by a desire to maintain the purity and order of this part of divine service in the sanctuary.

Resolved, 2d. In regard to the member of the church referred to above, whose language towards the pastor is complained of, we find that language to have been such as is not becoming one making a Christian profession ; and in connection with his course in sustaining an opposition to the pastor in the church and society, as deserving the censure of the church ;—but we trust the offending member will see cause in the spirit of Christian meekness to make confession of the same before God and the church, that he may stand right and acceptably before both.

Incidentally as connected with these main points, the council regret to find a seeming reluctance on the part of the church, to assume their proper responsibilities ; and also an unhappy alienation of feeling among some of the members. Accordingly we advise this church, first, promptly to assume the burdens properly belonging to them, and relieving their pastor of the office of clerk, to sustain him more fully by their prompt action and sympathy—and by securing, in the proper way, a new leader for the choir.

Second. We advise the church, in a prudent and Christian spirit, firmly to insist on a confession from the erring brother above-mentioned, acknowledging his wrong and injurious treatment of his pastor ; also to insist on a humble confession on the part of those at variance in the church, and a healing of the breach which has caused

so much trouble here. And if the gospel method of reconciliation shall fail, that the gospel discipline shall proceed and purify the church.

The report of the committee was accepted and adopted by the council unanimously, excepting the last section, to which there was one dissenting vote.

The minutes were then read and adopted.

(Signed) JOSEPH VAILL, *Moderator.*

H. M. PARSONS, *Scribe.*

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, Nov. 29, 1859.

At a church meeting held December 5, 1859, it was voted to accept and adopt the decision of the council, although a motion was made by one of Deacon Bardwell's party, "that as a church we will have nothing to do with councils, but will manage our own affairs." Subsequent movements show how much of *truth* and *sincerity* there was in this sentiment. At this meeting Deacon B. made a sort of acknowledgment, stating that "he might have used language which was unbecoming, and wherein he had done so, he acknowledged the wrong, and requested forgiveness of the church." One of his friends immediately moved "that this statement and request be accepted." Many persons saw the hollowness of the confession, but for the sake of peace, and hoping that if accepted further opposition might cease, voted for the motion, which was carried by 41 over 36 votes. The recommendation with respect to the removal of the chorister was also adopted. A committee of three was appointed to wait upon the parish committee to place before it the action of the church, and request it to adopt such measures as would accord with the church's wishes. Deacon Bardwell moved that the committee consist of females, which was voted, and Mrs. Deacon Bardwell, Mrs. Ambrose Snow, and Mrs. Joseph Carew, were duly appointed, and reported at the next meeting the following result as voted by the committee of the parish:

"That we concur with the council and the church in the recommendation of the one, and the vote of the other,—that Mr. Austin Ingraham should leave the leadership of the singing." The chorister was accordingly notified to leave that position, and he complied.

But the dissatisfied party determined to submit to no existing authority, whether in or out of the church; and they therefore called a meeting of the parish, which met December 23, and having

voted in several new members, some of whom had never heard our pastor preach, they were prepared to pass a string of resolutions condemnatory of his conduct, and requesting him to unite with them in calling a council for his dismissal "without delay." They also voted to reinstate the obnoxious chorister who had been removed by the committee. In the action with regard to the pastor, they afterwards found that they had been altogether too fast, as the church had not been consulted on the matter, but it helped to keep up the agitation, and therefore, so far helped their purpose. When they found out the mistake they had made in their indecent haste, they presented a paper to the pastor signed by eleven persons requesting him to call a meeting of the church, "to see if the church will take measures for the dismissal of Rev. R. Knight from the relation of pastor."

This meeting was held January 3, 1860. The pastor by the advice of several friends, was present and acted in his office of Moderator. This rather unusual proceeding seemed forced upon him by the peculiarity of the circumstances, and the character of his opponents. In this meeting a great deal of hard language and vituperation were used by the men who were disturbing the peace of the church, and after much discussion a vote was taken by yeas and nays, and carried by 60 over 39—"That it is not expedient to take measures for the dismissal of the Rev. R. Knight from the pastorate of this church."

In all the voting alluded to in this statement thus far, women took part—this had been the custom of the church as will be proved by-and-by. When the dissatisfied members found that a majority was against them, they began to oppose women's voting, but never before.

And here, it may be well to say, that as we wish to give a connected narrative, there may, in the publication of several of the documents, which it will be necessary to introduce, appear to be the occasional repetition of facts and circumstances, but this could not well be avoided without confusing the mind of the reader; and indeed, they may be considered more in the shape of confirmations than repetitions.

After the decision of the church meeting just alluded to, some of the disaffected members petitioned the pastor to call a meeting of the "proper voters" of the church to consider the matters which

had just been acted upon. By "proper voters," they gave the pastor to understand, that they meant the male members only; and of course, the request was denied, as it was not the desire of any who had voted in the majority to have a reconsideration. They then, on their own authority, called a meeting of the "legal voters," as they were pleased to designate them, of the church for January 17, and as none but their own party was present, twenty-one men (and a few women,) they carried all their points; and at once arrogated to themselves all the powers belonging to the church. Another meeting of the Parish was held on the twentieth, and of course it concurred with what they were pleased to call the vote of the church, and called a council to meet on the 31st. Our pastor refused to unite in the calling of this council on the ground that it was clearly against the wishes of the church, as manifested in the only meeting where the subject had been considered, which was legally called, and legally constituted, according to the usage of this church. The council was therefore, purely *ex parte*.

The following is a copy of the protest sent into this council by our Pastor :

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, January 31, 1860.

BRETHREN: You have been called together as a council to advise respecting the expediency of dismissing me from the pastorate of the Congregational Church in this place. The call purports to be in accordance with a vote of the church, and that I have refused to unite with the church in calling the council. Had this been the case, I should have appeared before you this day, but as it is not so, I refrain from being present, not wishing to give my sanction to a proceeding so irregular. I should not even have taken so much notice of the matter as to have written this note, only that I wish the churches represented to understand how they have been invited, and that my brethren in the ministry, especially, may not charge me with a want of Christian courtesy to them in being absent.

A few facts with regard to our church and society will give you to see how matters stand. Difficulties have arisen, and a short time ago a mutual council was called to give us some advice in the matter. That council examined thoroughly the whole case and I enclose an attested copy of their minutes for your perusal. I may say that the erring brother therein named did make a partial confession, which in its earnest desire for peace the church accepted; but the

hollowness of that confession has been proved by his again immediately commencing his course of a factious opposition to the pastor, and with his party persistently endeavoring to injure his character and usefulness. The church also passed a resolution in accordance with a recommendation of council, requesting the committee of the society to dismiss the leader of the singing from his position, which they did to the great gratification of a majority of the church and congregation. A meeting of the parish was then called by the disaffected parties, who, having previously brought into the society as members, many persons who never attended meeting, and even members of other churches, for the express purpose of opposing the pastor and those who sympathize with him, they voted against the wishes of pastor, church and council, to sustain the obnoxious leader.

After this a meeting of the church was called by the pastor, pursuant to a written request from the same disaffected parties, "to see if the church will take measures for the dismissal of Rev. R. Knight from the relation of pastor of the said church." The meeting was held on Tuesday, January, 3, 1860, when the church voted 60 to 39 that "it is not expedient to take measures for the dismissal of the Rev. R. Knight from the pastorate of this church." In this vote is included the votes of women, as it has been the usage in this church for more than twenty-five years for the women to vote on all important matters. The disaffected parties *now* found it convenient to oppose women's voting, although some of the leaders of this opposition had always previously been the strongest advocates *for* their voting. Being defeated in their purpose they now signed a paper calling a church meeting for January 17, to consider the very things which had been acted upon. This meeting was held, and *attended by the signers of the call only*, and a few of their immediate female friends. These twenty-one gentlemen voted themselves to be the Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls, and voted also to call the council which now assembles. Now we take the ground that a Congregational Church is independent so far as the management of its own internal affairs is concerned, and therefore it has a perfect right, if it chooses, to allow women to vote in its church meetings; no one can doubt this and therefore the clique of men who called the council had no right, no authority to do so, *as the church*; had they as a dissenting minority issued the call, you would not have been brought together under false pretences. Further, I

have only to say that the majority of the church is determined to sustain me, and I have determined to remain with this church; and therefore should you see fit to take any action in the premises, in accordance with the wishes of the persons inviting you, neither myself nor the church will be governed by it; our relations will remain the same, for my friends do not believe that my usefulness is ended here, they have proof to the contrary. I conclude by adding, that in this struggle I am not contending for any selfish end, but on public grounds, and in reality for my brethren in the ministry, and the churches, themselves in other places. Many of the short pastorates of which complaint is continually made, have resulted from the yielding to a few factious, disorderly, and often ignorant men, whose motto was "rule or ruin;" had they been treated properly and taught their place, the ministry would have been left to work out its great mission, through tribulation perhaps, but with a Divine blessing.

Yours most sincerely,

(Signed,)

RICHARD KNIGHT.

TO THE COUNCIL, &c.

The result at which this council arrived was simply that in view of the fact that according to the terms of settlement four months notice was required before any action could be taken in view of dissolving the pastoral relation, this notice must be given before anything could be done. The council also distinctly state that they are "guided only by the existing state of feeling, and *not by any examination into the history of the unhappy troubles;*" but that it was their opinion that if things remained as they now were at the end of the four months, "the relation of the pastor to this church and society should terminate."

Is it possible that a number of Christian men can come together and on mere ex-parte evidence come to such a decision? What minister is safe from the factious opposition of a few dissatisfied and mischievous men if they can thus be backed up in their vile proceedings?

The society, and the disaffected men calling themselves the church gave the four months notice to our pastor; but the point upon which we stand is that the notice was not legal, inasmuch as it required the concurrent action of church and society, whereas a majority of the church in legal meeting was opposed to the dismissal. At the expiration of the four months, however, an ex parte council was held,

(April 30, 1860), called in the same manner as before, and composed of nearly the same persons, and on *ex parte* evidence made its decisions. Two of Mr. Knight's friends were called upon indeed, and asked if this church was an exception to all other congregational churches in the matter of women's voting? of course they could not say that it was, and this was taken as evidence that women had never voted; the gate was then suddenly shut down, and no more evidence called for, although there were over twenty women present who were ready to testify that they had always been in the habit of voting in the meetings of the church whenever they pleased. At this council our pastor was present, and was requested to make it a *mutual* council; this he offered to do, if the council would examine into the troubles from the commencement, and if his opponents would agree, as he was willing to do, to abide by the result.

These terms they refused, and a committee was then appointed to confer with Mr. Knight to see if he could be induced to make it a mutual council on more satisfactory terms. That committee required that he should *unconditionally* submit his case to the council, and if the decision was adverse to him that he should *leave the village*. To such unreasonable terms of course he could not submit, and the committee reported that Mr. Knight would not agree to make it a mutual council on satisfactory terms. "O shame where is thy blush?" Two clergymen who were present as Mr. Knight's friends retired with him and the committee, and we here give their recollections of that conference.

The Rev. Sanford S. Smith of Warren, writes, addressing Mr. Knight:—

"You ask my recollections of the condition upon which a certain *ex parte* council should be made a mutual one, as presented by the committee of the council to yourself and your friends, on that occasion. Mr. Mills of Granby was chief speaker, and this was the burden of his demand—that at all events you should leave the village; and if you and your friends would not agree to that as a preliminary, there would be no use of making the council mutual. Bro. Walker and myself declared that we had no power to bind Mr. Knight or his friends in South Hadley to any such step, and should not therefore undertake to do it; to which Mr. Drummond fully agreed that we had no such power,—and the conference ended, and the council proceeded as it began,—entirely *ex parte*."

Rev. J. B. R. Walker of Holyoke, than whom no man knows so well all the bearings of this case, he having closely watched all the proceedings from the first, and having been present at all the councils, writes to Mr. Knight as follows:—

HOLYOKE, March 9, 1863.

REV. AND DEAR BRO.: "I hereby comply with your request to give you in writing my recollections of your offer to make the second *ex parte* council in South Hadley Falls a mutual council. In the absence of the Rev. S. S. Smith, you requested me to sit beside you as adviser. After your protest against the council's proceeding to dismiss you, and considerable discussion among its members, the proposition was made to you, that you consent to make it a mutual council: I said to you, "By no means; the proposition is an insult to your common sense. They can have no idea that you will accede to any such thing. That you should submit your cause to a council, the clerical members of which have, with one or two exceptions, already in an *ex parte* council decided against you, and are now committed against you, and have come here simply to ratify a previous decision, is preposterous." You, however, in spite of my advice, arose and said, "Yes, I have such confidence in the integrity and candor of these brethren, notwithstanding their previous action, that if they will make a thorough investigation of these troubles from the beginning, I will make this a mutual council, and abide by its results if my opponents will do the same. So confident am I of the strength of my cause, and the inevitable result of a fair and complete investigation, and so desirous that these troubles be settled, that I am willing on these conditions to abide by the result of a council which I have had no part in calling." Immediately the opposite party protested against such conditions; urging "that it was absurd to think of going over all the jealousies and gossip and feuds in the church for the last twenty-five years, that no good and only great harm could come of such a raking over of these old troubles. You rose at once and replied, that such was not your idea, or wish, or proposition:—that you contemplated only a thorough examination of the facts relating to *your own troubles*, and the factious opposition to your ministry. Your opponents were unwilling to accept your proposition. They had called their council of picked men, and called it to do a special work, the very work, this council when convened before had decided ought to be done. Why then should your oppo-

nents wish an investigation? The whole thing was in their hands, the result they wished, they were confident of securing. They knew the council when first convened, only partially investigated the matters, having voted that they were legitimately called,* before they had made an examination of the point on which the whole question hangs; and that they proceeded to their decision, making no attempt to draw out the *positive* testimony of females present, in regard to the custom of female voting in your church, just as if you would *crowd* upon the council counter evidence, and as if females would volunteer their testimony, when you did not recognize the right or validity of the council to deliberate upon your troubles. Your *opponents*, evinced *no disposition* to have the council mutual. The council, however, discussed the matter somewhat, and it was at length voted to appoint a committee to confer with you, and see if you could be prevailed upon to make the council mutual. It seems a little singular that the committee should have been appointed to confer with *you*, when it is obvious that those who needed to be labored with for this purpose, were your opponents. The committee was the Rev. Mr. Drummond, and I think Mills, of Granby, and Blake, of Belchertown. The Rev. S. S. Smith had then arrived, and by your request, he and myself went out with you to confer with the committee. The effort of the committee was to induce you to accept the council as yours unconditionally, and that if it should decide against you, you should leave the village. The subject was talked over on both sides some twenty minutes. You reiterated your proposition for a *full and thorough investigation* of the difficulties from the beginning, such as the first council (mutual) made. It was urged by Rev. S. S. Smith, and myself, that such a proffer was most *magnanimous*; and in view of the fact that men however good, who have already formed opinions upon a subject in controversy, are often insensibly biased, your proposal was *more* generous than we should make, and that *we* should demand that a mutual council be one uncommitted, and one which we had partly selected.

What was my amazement on returning to the church to hear the committee report, that they had been unable to induce you to make the council mutual on satisfactory terms. The council then proceeded unembarrassed to their result. It was then that you discovered

* See account of Ex parte Council, on page 4/ in which this is acknowledged by the council itself.

that the records belonging to you as clerk of the church, had been stolen from your pew, while absent by request of the council. So flagrant was the theft—this seizing an unjust advantage of you, when at the service of the council, woke an instant protest. Bro. Drummond at once sprung from his seat, demanding in the name of *justice*, and *honor*, and *decency*, that the records be restored to you; saying that if the council was to be an arena for such tricks and sharp practice he would have nothing to do with it. The condemnation of the act was so strong, that one of your opponents came over to you and gave up the records, and slunk back, if not with self-contempt, yet with the pity of every truly honorable and high-minded man present.

I felt a kind of pity for the council summoned to work for such men, and wondered that they did not suspect that possibly they were being misled by the trickeries and misrepresentations of the leaders of the opposition against you.

I remembered very vividly the scene of the first council, when the moral sense of the entire council was so shocked by the apparent attempts of your chief opponent to hoodwink the council, and falsify the facts so flagrantly, (as was shown by Bro. Cone and myself who were cognizant of them), that after his own address of over two hours in length, he left but one course to the council, and that its *unanimous* condemnation of himself, and the vindication of yourself. I have been “a looker on in Venice” during all your troubles; have watched the proceedings of *all the* councils from the *beginning* to the *end*, and I have had no reason to change my opinion formed at the outset, after a fair and complete investigation of the difficulty. I have been the more convinced that it was gendered in jealousy, brought forth in iniquity, nursed by hatred, and has thriven by duplicity, misrepresentation, uncharitableness and fraud. The history of the councils in South Hadley Falls is a melancholy one, and convinces me that it is human to err. I trust God may give you his peace so abundantly, that you and yours may know how Divine it is to forgive.

I congratulate you my dear brother on the prosperity that has attended you in spite of your “many adversaries;” that God has given, and is now giving you the best token of his gracious favor and approval—that your church is now more numerous than when you first went to South Hadley Falls, that its benevolent contributions are

larger, and that in all that constitutes church prosperity, you are flourishing. I rejoice that when your enemies were plotting against you, and when a large council by their call, was advising them to excommunicate you as seceders—as a factious and irregular body, God was granting you and yours the precious and unmistakable proof of His Spirit's presence and power, and thus setting upon your church the seal and sanction of heaven.

I would rather be with you, with God thus on your side, and in your midst, so unmistakably giving the seal of legitimacy to your church, than be with your enemies, though they should have the results of a hundred *ex parte* councils in their support.

I could not but feel as I watched the proceedings of the last council (February 8, 1863,) and saw how facts which I knew, were distorted, or falsified, or suppressed, that it would be well if they would regard the advice of Gamaliel: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone, lest haply ye be found to fight against God."

But a few partisans in the council were the willing instruments of those who called them, and hence the proposition made by the scribe, that the council recommend that the whole subject be submitted to pastors and delegates called from a distance, and who have not been biased by previous knowledge or reports, was defeated. And so too the vote to get facts and testimony, rebutting that of your opponents, from any and every source was disregarded, and no effort was made to obtain *any*, after you declined to appear before the council personally, or by proxy. And surely no reasonable or sensible man supposed that you or your church would come in there before an *ex parte* council, of which you knew nothing till the Sabbath evening before, and much less, (even though you might be willing to submit your facts to such a body), upon the notice of an hour. There are many facts that occur to me, but I need not recite them. You ask for my testimony respecting your reasonable and magnanimous offer to the second *ex parte* council. In my judgment, nothing more could reasonably be asked of you, and so I think will every candid and unbiased person judge. I have given you the facts *as I know them*. And if the history of the *ex parte* councils in South Hadley Falls be ever written, unless I have greatly mistaken the ministers and churches of the Commonwealth, these facts, which no man can deny, will awaken surprise, illustrate the generous spirit you have shown, and vindicate your course.

My notes of the proceedings of the councils are at your service, and if in any way I can help you to maintain the right—good order in the churches, and resistance to factious troublers in Israel, I shall be ready to do so. Wishing you a continuance of prosperity,

I am yours, fraternally,

J. B. R. WALKER.

(We have given the whole of this excellent letter although a part of it refers to a later council than the one about which we are speaking). During the absence of Mr. Knight with the committee, the council most complacently sat and heard one of Mr. Knight's opponents pour out such a deluge of abuse and falsehood against him without a single word of check or rebuke, that many of the audience were amazed and horror-stricken. After the report of the committee was rendered, the council went on with the work it came to perform, and formally professed to dismiss Mr. Knight from the pastorate of the church.

The fact, that by such proceedings it appears to be assumed that the pastors of Congregational churches hold their positions by so slight a tenure that at the beck and call of a few dissatisfied men, a council of grave ministers and laymen can be brought together at any time to do their bidding, and cast off the servant of Christ from where the Lord has blessed and is blessing his labors, made us take the stand we have taken against such injustice; and with the hope of helping to rid Congregationalism of this useless but offensive excrescence, an ex parte council.

Our beloved minister was assailed, and we determined to stand by him; he was willing and wishful to leave when the troubles first commenced, but we urged him to stay, for we had already suffered so much from the same spirit which was endeavoring to drive him off, that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue.

As our opponents had attained a majority in the parish meeting, by the disgraceful means already alluded to, we had no alternative but to leave, with our pastor, the meeting house, and worship in some other place. Mr. Knight held the records of the church, and might have retained them still, but for the sake of peace, and hoping such a course might pacify the parties, who had previously endeavored to get possession of them by fraud, he gave them up with the following letter to Deacon Gaylord:

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, May 3, 1860.

MR. JOHN GAYLORD—SIR: Herewith, I send you the books and papers of the Congregational Church. I told Mr. Weld I should give them up. I claimed and retained them on Monday evening last, because I do not admit the right or jurisdiction of any *ex parte* council to adjudicate on the matter.

I now give them up to you, (I mean that part of the church which will continue to worship at the meeting-house, when I say *you*) I say then, I now give them up to you simply for the sake of peace. I and my friends have been for peace all the while—we have simply acted on the defensive, standing by the standard of truth and the doctrines of our church. And now, seeing that an *ex parte* council has no power whatever, to dissolve the relation between a pastor and his church, unless the parties agree to it, I remain the pastor of the Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls, although we may not all worship in the same place. *Now* let there be peace; *we* worship in Salem Chapel for the sake of peace; you remain in the meeting-house, let it be for the sake of peace. Let the world see that there is some Christianity left; let the object of each party be the conversion of souls, and not the defaming of each others characters. I send the books, &c., to yourself because you are a rightfully elected officer of the church.

I remain, yours sincerely,

RICHARD KNIGHT.

I have taken a copy of the records.

The division now took place, and sixty persons, resident members of the church adhered to their pastor, and remain with him, as partakers of the same cup of blessing, (excepting one who has died, and a few who have left the village).

The attendance in our new place of worship has been gradually increasing in numbers since our first meeting, and many proofs have been given that the usefulness of Mr. Knight's ministry in this place was not at an end.

Throughout this whole controversy we have simply stood upon the defensive, and have never before thrust our cause upon any individual or body of individuals, and should not do so now, were it not for the constancy with which the most flagrant falsehoods and the claims based upon them, are put forth by our opponents and their abettors, in councils and newspapers.

Towards the close of the year 1860, the party retaining the meeting-house, having found a minister, strange as it may seem, who was willing to settle over them as a pastor, although matters were in such an unsettled state,—called a council for the purpose of installing that minister over them; thinking, no doubt, that if a council would do this work for them it might appear to persons in the distance, at least, that they really were the church. The council met, and did their work. Mr. Knight felt, however, that should he allow this to be done without protest, it might appear that he had given up his claim to the pastorate, and he therefore sent in the following letter—some particulars in which are repetitions of what has been already stated, and others will explain our action with regard to the withdrawal of the watch and care of the church from fifty-nine of its members.

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, December, 4, 1860.

To the Moderator of the Council,

SIR: I think it my duty as the rightful pastor of the church purporting to call you and the other members of the council together on the present occasion to lay before you a few particulars.

It is well known that difficulties have existed in this church for many years; difficulties arising principally from Diotrephesism.

This to a great extent has been the cause of the resignation and withdrawal of the majority of the pastors who have been settled over the church. Of course I was not likely to escape what others had had to endure.

Instead of retiring, however, when the rebellion commenced, I united with the church in calling a mutual council for advice in the matter; the following was the result: [See page five.]

The "erring brother" made a sort of general acknowledgement to the church which for the sake of peace was received; but, it was only, as subsequent conduct proved, intended to hush the church into silence that fresh attacks might be made. If the advice in the last article of the "result" could have been carried out, the church would have been saved the pain and the disgrace it has since suffered; for during a previous pastorate, the church enjoyed a season of quiet, when this leader of the quarrel absented himself for nearly two years from all participation in its affairs and ordinances and attended worship (under my own ministrations) in a neighboring parish.

I may briefly state that after matters had gone on for some time after the meeting of the council alluded to, the disaffected members, all the while using every possible influence to destroy my usefulness in the place, requested me, in writing, to call a meeting of the church "To see if the church will take measures for the dismissal of Rev. R. Knight from the relation of pastor of the said church." The meeting was called, at which the church voted 60 to 39 that "it is not expedient to take measures for the dismissal of the Rev. R. Knight from the pastorate of this church." In this meeting the women voted, and it was proved to the full and perfect satisfaction of the first council, *which heard both sides*, that women had always voted, whenever they pleased, from the organization of the church, and therefore, on the true principles of Congregationalism, every church managing its own internal affairs, they had a perfect right to vote. Indeed, this very matter of women's voting had always been advocated by the very man who was one of the first to appeal against it, when he found the majority against him.

The council which was subsequently called for the purpose of dismissing me, was called by the few men who have taken upon themselves to act as the church; 20 for 120.

Now I contend that no *ex parte* council, so called, had any power whatever to dismiss me from the pastoral charge of a church voting by a majority of 21 against such dismissal. Here I take my stand. I am still the pastor of the church, and no act of any council, except a mutual, can make it otherwise.

You know, brethren, that the precedent cannot be found in any of the authorities for an act so unjust and so cruel, of such a dismissal as it is said I have had. If such a thing is to be justified, then are you all, as pastors, at the mercy of one or two disaffected men in your churches. I am therefore but defending a principle of right and justice, in which you are all concerned, in thus maintaining my position.

I might say much with regard to the manner in which the majority in the society was obtained, by which I was voted out of the meeting-house, but will not trespass so far upon your time.

I will only now say that I and my people have no opposition to make to your settling a minister to preach to those who attend the meeting-house; on the contrary we rejoice in it; for we hope that he may exercise such an influence over some of the leaders as may cause

them to act with a little more Christian decency if not courtesy towards myself and others who think with me ; for we have it on incontestable evidence that some of these men persistently and maliciously utter the most abominable calumnies against my character, for which some of my friends are inclined to let them feel the weight of the law, seeing that the gospel has failed to influence them ; but we do not wish to be driven to such an alternative. I say we object not to the settlement of a minister but we do wish you to act intelligently in the matter.

The disaffected party having taken means to settle a pastor over them as the church, however, I thought it my duty to call a meeting of the church, which was done by notice affixed to the door of the meeting house : said meeting was held at Salem Chapel, my present place of preaching. At that meeting it was voted to cite certain persons to appear—as explained in the following letter addressed to fifty-nine members ; a list of whose names are enclosed :

SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, November 27, 1860.

To A. B. C.

At a duly called meeting of the South Church of South Hadley, held in Salem Chapel on Monday evening, November 26, 1860, it was stated that certain members of the said church have combined to settle another pastor, the Rev. R. Knight, being still the legal pastor of the church. You are charged with having united with said disaffected members in their contumacious conduct, and in so doing, with breaking your covenant engagements, and you are therefore hereby cited to appear before a meeting of the said church, to be held in Salem Chapel on Friday evening, November 30, 1860, at 7 o'clock, to answer the charge or make such statements as shall satisfy the church that you are blameless.

By vote of the church

RICHARD KNIGHT,

Pastor and Clerk of the Church.

The church met accordingly and none of the cited members appearing we had no alternative but to withdraw our watch and care from them, this was done by a nearly unanimous vote, which was confirmed at a subsequent meeting. Thus the persons calling themselves the church are in reality out of its pale. We would have given them letters had they applied, and even now are ready to rescind the vote and do so if they wish.

We wish to live in peace ; we shall go on seeking the blessing of God in the endeavor to save souls, and earnestly pray that you may be guided to such decisions as shall be for the glory of God, and not of man.

Most respectfully yours,

RICHARD KNIGHT.

The day after the settlement of the minister alluded to, the church held a meeting at which the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously voted :

“ WHEREAS, the members of this church who have separated from us have had a pastor settled over them as a church of Christ ; and as they still retain the use of the meeting-house through the influence of the ‘ South Religious Society of South Hadley,’ and will probably use the name by which this church was organized, viz : ‘ The South Church of Christ in South Hadley.’

“ And as it may lead to confusion in the minds of the public generally to have two churches in this village bearing the same name ; we deem it better to adopt a name which shall show to what denomination of Christians we belong, and on that account consider it expedient that the name of this church be altered.

“ *Therefore, Resolved,* That the name of this church be, and is hereby altered, and that it hereafter be ‘ The First Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls.’ Voted December 5th 1860.”

Since that time this has been the legal name of our church ; and soon after this a new parish or society was organized and regularly incorporated according to the Laws of the State, called “ The First Congregational Society in South Hadley Falls.” The name of the other society, which has never been incorporated, is “ The South Religious Society of South Hadley.” Its constitution states that it is an association “ for the purpose of maintaining the public worship of God, and public instruction in the doctrines and practice of the Christian religion.” Now who does not see that in such a constitution there is not a single safeguard against heresy ? A majority of that society might vote at their next meeting to give the use of the meeting-house to any body of religionists whatever, as they all profess, however heretical, to worship God, &c. The First Congregational Society has placed itself in no such indefinite and equivocal position, but in its constitution states that it is formed for the “ purpose of maintaining the public worship of God and public instruction

in the doctrines and practice of the Christian religion *as GENERALLY taught in the articles of faith of the Orthodox Congregational churches in Massachusetts, and PARTICULARLY in the articles of faith and covenant of the First Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls as printed by vote of said church, December 5, 1860.*"

Thus the doctrines and polity of the church to be supported by this society are defined and guarded, and we think this fact, with others named, gives us the most perfect claim to the name we have taken.

The minister of the "South Society," after his settlement, connected himself with the Hampshire East Association, our pastor being a member of the Hampden East Association. If we understand aright the nature of an association of Congregational ministers, it is a body "constituted with the simple design of mutual improvement and fellowship as ministers;" having no ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever over the churches, or right of dictation or interference with their actions. And yet, strange to say, the Hampshire East Association assumed a position which clearly did not belong to it, and voted a preamble and resolution to the effect that this church is no church at all, and Mr. Knight is no pastor at all, and that therefore we ought not to be recognized or fellowshipped. Wise (?) men they must be who could thus decide a question of such importance upon such one-sided and scanty evidence as came before them. Such an assumption of power is scarcely credible in Congregationalism; and amongst those who really understand the pure principles of Congregationalism will scarcely be believed. Yet so it was, and we can scarcely help thinking that if men were a little better acquainted with the polity of the church in which they minister, they could not be guilty of such unwarrantable conduct. The associations as a matter of convenience collect the statistics of the churches for the General Association of the State, and of course the statistics of the so called Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls were presented by its minister to the Hampshire East Association, and sent with the rest. To this we do not object, notwithstanding the incorrectness of the statistics themselves, inasmuch as we are assured that an association has really no power to authenticate or deny any schedule presented by a member in good standing with it, but simply to pass it along, the responsibility of correctness resting upon the individual presenting it. The Hampden East Association taking this proper view of

the matter forwarded the statistics of our church as presented by our pastor. This however, was not in accordance with the views of some members of the Hampshire East Association, who evidently thought that they ought to be the sole arbitors in this matter; and therefore, a paper in the form of a protest, addressed to the Hampden East Association was got up and hawked round the whole Association by the man who had been the ringleader in all the troubles of the church, obtaining by his false representations the signatures of nearly all the members of the Association. The arguments of that paper were all based upon the false assumption that an ex parte council has the power to dismiss a pastor from his office. We cannot but think that many of the ministers who were so deluded by misrepresentation and falsehood, will be sorry for what they did, when they learn all the facts of the case. The Hampden East Association sent an answer to the document named, stating in substance, that they had merely acted upon the principles just alluded to in sending the statistics of our church to the General Association without authenticating or denying their correctness. At the meeting of the Association to which the document of the Hampshire East ministers was presented, and from which the answer was returned, it was also voted, which proves that the Association did not believe in the power claimed for the ex parte council,—“that we regard the controversy among the brethren at South Hadley Falls as yet unsettled, and would therefore recommend to Brother Knight to use his influence to have the whole matter in controversy referred to a mutual council.” At a meeting of our church held January 21, 1862, our pastor laid this request before the meeting, when it was unanimously voted, that a committee be appointed to draw up a letter to the Hampden East Association, stating such facts and making such explanations as they may deem necessary in declining to accede to its recommendation.”

The following is a copy of the letter which was presented to the Association at its meeting in South Hadley Falls, with our pastor, February 4, 1862:

To the Hampden East Association:

The committee appointed to draw up a letter to the Hampden East Association in response to their resolution annexed, report as follows:—

It is with surprise that we have read the document presented to

your body by the Hampshire East Association which was the occasion of your resolution. We had begun to hope that the "whole matter in the controversy" in which we have been constrained, by respect for the ministerial office, by regard for church order, by manifest justice and Christian expediency to bear a prominent though painful part was becoming settled. We desire no further agitation of the subject, about which there has been such divided opinion and feeling in the community. We therefore deprecate any public review of the difficulties which have for over two years, distracted the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls. But it is due to your body that we should, as briefly as we may, state the grounds of this judgment. Attached to our pastor as a faithful expounder of the Gospel, and a good minister of Jesus Christ, we were startled a little over two years since, by the breaking out of a factious and violent opposition to him. Hostility to the truths he preached, combined with personal jealousies, industrious and not over scrupulous in their representations, aggregated a powerful force. So serious did the matter become, that at length the question of his dismissal was submitted to a church meeting legally called and legally held. The vote of the church by a majority of twenty-one sustained him. As is known by all who know anything of our troubles, the female members of the church participated in this vote. They did so in accordance with the time honored and well understood usage of our church. No one questioned their right to do so previous to that meeting. Our pastor's most violent enemies were as industrious in urging and carrying females to that meeting, in order to vote, as were any of his friends. We can have little doubt, that had the vote been the reverse, we should never have had the validity of female voting in our church questioned in the least. Finding themselves defeated, his enemies at once, in disregard of church order and the will of the majority, legally (because according to the usage of this church) expressed, in a factious disregard of the moderator, and the proper methods of calling church meetings, then and there gave notice of a meeting of the *male* members of the church, to consider the question, which had just been decided, in a meeting properly convened. In such violation of courtesy, justice and church order, in such unscrupulous over-riding of the legally expressed will of the church, did the opposition begin the measures which have pro-

duced so much tumult in the community, giving occasion to the enemy to blaspheme, and dismembering the church.

From such illegitimate origin has all their subsequent action proceeded. It is accordingly vitiated and can lay no just claim to recognition by those who regard "church order."

Some time previous to these movements, it was agreed by Mr. Knight and his opponents to submit the matter to a mutual council. A large and respectable council from the neighboring churches was convened; its result was the unanimous vindication of our pastor and the recommendation of a disciplinary procedure towards him who had been most active and virulent in the opposition. This council was called at a period when these troubles had not become so widely known and so much talked of, that most of the ministers and members in the neighboring churches had become in a measure disqualified for a fair and impartial consideration of them. The manifest attempts of the aggrieved member of the church to *deceive* the council, the surprising self-revelation of his unscrupulous misrepresentation and falsifications of facts, left the council but one *plain path of duty*.

There was a remarkable unanimity in the result, and carrying with it such weight and moral authority, we had reason to suppose and hope that it would put an end to our troubles. But we were doomed to disappointment, and it became evident, that the fomenters of discord were bent upon accomplishing their object, at whatever sacrifice. Having carried on a factious and illegitimate procedure, in what they termed the meetings of the church, (we say illegitimate, because, not called in accordance with usage and church order, and because the pastor as moderator was under no obligation to convene a meeting of the church unless so required by some person who desired to *reconsider* and *reverse* his previous action), these persons in this disorderly way called an *ex parte* council. This council as some of you will remember, spent a long time in discussing the validity of their call. But without any investigation into the facts respecting the right and usage of females to vote in the church, the council at length, voted that they find themselves legitimately convened, and they decided in view of the evident acrimonious and embittered feelings existing towards Mr. Knight, that it was expedient that his pastoral relation be sundered in accordance with the terms of settlement. It was with singular fidelity an *ex parte* council; it ignored the very

question upon which the whole controversy must hinge. But preferring an easier way, they considered chiefly the state of feeling existing, and assuming their own validity without investigation, reached their result. The next stage in the procedure is the call of another *ex parte* council, the *same council nearly*, in accordance with its previous advice to dismiss Mr. Knight. A protest having been presented by our pastor, the question of validity and the constitutional right of the party calling them had to be considered. Testimony was taken in regard to the practice and usages of the church, concerning female voting in the settlement and dismission of pastors. Several *men* testified that they did not *know* that females *had voted on such occasions*. Those opposed and those friendly to Mr. Knight so stated. To the questions, as put by the council, there was the *same* answer, and yet some of us who were so interrogated, have never had any doubt, that it has been the custom of the church for female members to vote on such matters. Had we been asked if we *knew* that the members who were *mechanics* have voted at such times, we could not affirm it upon our *positive knowledge*; if the question had referred to those who are *farmers*, we must have given the *same* answer. As pastors *you* are aware, that a small portion of the *male* members of a church actively participate in its procedure; much less can laymen affirm with positive certainty, based upon knowledge, that any portion or class of the church have voted in regard to any specific subjects. It will be remembered that it does not seem to be a disputed question, whether they have voted in the ordinary business of the church at the annual meetings in the election of officers, &c., and if we are not misinformed, at the annual meeting for the election of officers held the last week by the persons claiming to be the Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls, females voted. Can you conceive it possible (supposing it to be the fact that females have voted at such and other times,) that any man in the church, if honest, could affirm that he *knows* females have voted upon the call or dismission of a minister? Had the council pleased, they could have summoned many other *such* witnesses. But is such *negative* testimony worth *anything*? Is it possible that "a large and respectable council from the neighboring churches" could accept such as proof, and be controlled by it in reaching a result so momentous as the severing of the pastoral relation? We cannot but feel that with such, the Irishman, who, when told that two persons saw him commit

a misdemeanor, replied that he could find fifty that did not see him, would be esteemed as having the weight of testimony in his favor, and so be acquitted.

We therefore regard the course pursued by the council in this matter as clearly unjust and wrong, and their judgment based upon evidence plainly inadmissible. And furthermore, this is the more surprising when there were females in the assembly who *could*, and were *ready* if called upon, to affirm *positively* their remembrance of having voted upon this important matter of the call and dismissal of a minister. Why did not some member of that council, forgetting the *ex parte* character of their call, suggest this obviously just and needed course. We were amazed by the omission, and we cannot reconcile it with the *fairness* and *intelligence* which distinguishes those who are set as overseers of the churches. Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses the fact might have been established in spite of the *negative* affirmation of *fifty* persons. If it be asked why this evidence was not *pressed* upon the council? We reply, we had come to the conclusion, to let the council proceed unmolested. Their result was as well known at the beginning of their session, as at the end, for they were called to *complete their own previous action*, and ratify what purported to be the vote of the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls. Our Pastor Rev. Mr. Knight, presented a protest, chiefly because the omission to do so would be urged as a tacit and indirect confession of an untenable position, but not with any idea of embarrassing the procedure of the council, nor with any hope of restraining its action, for that was a foregone conclusion when they met. It was our purpose to take no part in the procedure of the council, but only to be lookers on. We could not help foreseeing that an *ex parte* council would be likely to act in harmony with its *previous decision*. Accordingly the path of duty was plain before us. We had evidence enough in the mad and unscrupulous warfare that had been raging around us for months, to show that any attempt to subdue the factious opposition would be fruitless,—and especially in view of a *fact of great significance*. At an early stage of the proceedings of the council, Mr. Knight having entered his protest, request was made that he unite with the party calling the council and make it mutual. It seemed to *us* asking a great concession, that he should submit his own interests to the judgment of a council, that had already decided in favor of our opponents, and had now been

convened to do just what they had recommended several months previously. It could hardly be expected that he would be ready to yield to such an arbitration, the referees being disqualified by previous opinions and actions upon the subject in controversy. While courteous to ask for such a surrender, it is probable that none of the council anticipated that it would be made. The appeal having been urged with great earnestness, and repeatedly, Mr. Knight arose and said, if the council would pledge themselves to undertake a thorough examination of the whole difficulty, from the beginning, he would agree to submit it to them, and pledge himself and his friends to abide by their result, on condition that his opponents would make a similar pledge. Immediately several of the persons calling the council arose and protested against such an investigation, asserting that it would be fruitful of no good, to rake over the difficulties and feuds of twenty-five years standing; a very significant though tacit confession, that in their conviction the conflict had its origin in causes *antecedent to, and independent of* Mr Knight, and thus an indirect *condemnation of their procedure against him*. So earnest was their protest, that the council declined Mr. Knight's stipulation, but appointed a committee to confer with him, and if possible persuade him to make the council mutual. He retired with the committee, and in their conference, as we learn from one who participated in it, he stated that he had no idea in his proposition, of going back to probe *old difficulties*, but that if the council would agree to investigate *the matter, from the beginning of his own troubles* with disaffected members, and the other party would agree to accept the result of the council, he would do the same. With this reasonable and generous offer, and nothing could be more reasonable, the committee returned and reported that they could *make no arrangements with Mr. Knight that were satisfactory*. An *unconditional* surrender *would* have been satisfactory. But could the council have supposed, that we and our pastor, whom we loved and clung to, were so insincere—or so weak, as to submit to the dictation of persons who were unwilling to thoroughly acquaint themselves with the whole matter, and thus be qualified to say on whom the blame rests, and to whom belongs the duty of concession. Our convictions of the justice and constitutional rightness of our proceedings and position were too strong and conscientious for *such easy compliance*. Here was an opportunity to settle the controversy, and to avoid the evils, of which the Hampshire East Association so strongly

ly and so partizanly complain. It exceeds our comprehension how they could resist the proposition of our pastor, more magnanimous than *we* approved of, because it was submitting *our* interests to a tribunal *disqualified* by previous opinions and decision, for reaching an *impartial* result. It was while Mr. Knight was outside the church in conference with the committee that the church records, which he held as clerk of the church, and which had been lent to Mr. Gillett with the promise of their return to Mr. Knight, were taken possession of by the party calling the council, who refused to return them, and it was then, that the now lamented Drummond, whose upright and manly spirit could not brook the thought or taint of such a tricky and dishonorable action, arose and protested against the outrage, demanding in the name of manliness and religion, that the records be restored to Mr. Knight. With such a public revelation of the measures to which the opposition were ready to resort,—and in view of the fact that at the hands of the council Mr. Knight could get no thorough and fair inquiry into the whole trouble, but must yield only unconditional surrender—we felt that it would be useless to attempt to exert any influence upon the council. Accordingly no matters were suggested, no appeals made, no witnesses named by any of us. The council were allowed to proceed according to *their* ideas of justice, and the best method of reaching a safe and sound judgment; accordingly *the whole responsibility of the consequences must attach to THEM and THOSE who gave existence to the council.*

We must therefore, in view of these facts and others that time forbids us to give, decline to follow your recommendation. We think we have offered all, and conceded all, that Christian magnanimity and forbearance require. Our peace, our prosperity and religious growth and fellowship have claims upon us. *We* pledged ourselves to abide by the result of the first mutual council; our opponents would *not* agree to do so. *We* agreed to accept the council they themselves had called, a council that had already decided as they wished, and to abide by its result after a complete investigation, if *they* would. Our proposition was *refused*. Is it not then asking too much of us, now at this late day, to reopen the Pandora's box of church troubles. We have felt that some of the fiends and furies, evoked by ambition, caprice, and hostility to the truth, were being overcome; should a large and respectable council adjudicate upon the matter—those who have so *unscrupulously* and *repeatedly* violated

church order and *implied pledges* would repudiate the decision, and as there is too much evidence to believe, would *then* be able to convene an *ex parte* council to prolong and keep alive the bitter controversy for months if not years. We apprehend *no council can be called which can settle the matter with our opponents* unless it grant *all that they wish*. We affirm in view of the trials and warfare through which we have passed, that the particulars in the records complained of by the Hampshire East Association are "historical verities." It is in the strictest adherence to "constitutional order and church usage" (with us) and the right of Congregational churches to make their own rules and adopt their own methods of church action, that the results have been reached as stated in the record ;—you all know that the concurrence of the *society is not essential to the existence of the church*. Our New England church history is proof too, that to go out from the *sanctuary* where they have worshipped, on account of heresy or of factions, does not extinguish the life of a church. By a faithful regard to church order, and in resistance to a faction that sought to over-ride established rules and usages, we have maintained the continuous life and historical existence of the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls. And for the sake of avoiding confusion and clamor about the title to the same name, we have by a legal method, adopted the name of the "First Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls,"—and we have according to Congregational usage, withdrawn watch and care from those who have walked disorderly. We claim to be the only Congregational church in South Hadley Falls, properly organized. The *ex parte* council proved themselves legitimate, says the Hampshire East Association, "because in the circumstances no mutual council was possible"—we have shown it *was* possible, by a *marked instance of magnanimity and confidence in the impartiality of his brethren on the part of our pastor*.

Denying the allegation and being able to substantiate the denial, *we say* the *ex parte* council was *illegitimate* according to the admission of the Hampshire East Association, and Mr. Knight, therefore, has never been dismissed from the church in South Hadley Falls, organized as "the South Church of Christ in South Hadley," in 1824.

The other inferences involved in this statement we need not give in detail. We are not responsible for them, and however they may

concern the *ex parte* councils or the persons that called them, *we* are thoroughly convinced of the strict church order and intrinsic righteousness of our proceedings.

You are condemned by another Association for the record submitted by your scribe, and very justly reply, that it is not your province to *authenticate the reports of the churches*. With an *apparent* regard for precedents and rules, ringing the changes upon "*Congregational usages and church order*" with suspicious frequency, the Hampshire East Association allege that *your* Association is responsible for its record, and that *their* orderly record is "*nullified*." What must be your surprise to find that you are arraigned by a body who in the assumption of "*an orderly record*" have claimed the *Sabbath School belonging to us as a part of the Sabbath School* of their so called Congregational Church of South Hadley Falls? You will *not* be surprised that we should question the legitimacy and justice of the action of a council of which *they* formed the *greater and more active* part, when by *their own admissions* they endorse so singular an assumption, and *authenticate what is plainly false*. We are represented by them as "*embarrassed members of the Church in South Hadley Falls*." We cannot admit this description, nor do we "*desire a new organization*,"—nor do we plead for "*charity*,"—nor do we feel the need of "*relief*." We have gone through a warfare "*only that order may be maintained*,"—"and our record is true and untarnished."

We have contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints against *errorists*. We have suffered reproach and reviling for the proprieties of Christian worship, for the purity and peace of the church. We have resolutely clung to the *way of order* against *faction*. We have esteemed him who is set over us in the Lord, very highly for his work's sake, and could not permit his character to be assailed, and his usefulness destroyed, without defending him against injustice and misrepresentation. What we ask for is peace, and the permission to sit under our own vine, unmolested by enemies both clerical and laical. And had the Hampshire East Association adhered to its legitimate work, and in accordance with "*its constitutional order*," devoted its time to mutual improvement, instead of attempting to determine the legitimacy and status of churches in its neighborhood; had it wisely resisted the pressure of the "*disobliged and embarrassed members*" from whom we have withdrawn watch and care on account of their disorderly walk, we should have

been saved from the necessity of this statement, and you from your position; but if our opponents cannot thrive or exist, but by a perpetual agitation and hostility, (as seems too evident,) then we are doomed to a resistance and vigilance we hoped to be relieved from, and must patiently and prayerfully wait till their spiritual barrenness and internal discord, already visible among them, shall prove that strife with *us* is futile of *harm to us*, and *fatal to themselves*. And the evident blessing of God upon our endeavors and sacrifices, the unanimity existing among us, the growing interest in the labors of our pastor, and the extending usefulness of the church, convince us that we need no "*relief*," nor "*charity*," nor "*open door*," such as any council can give us. We have contended for the *permanency* and *sacredness* of the *pastoral relation*, and think, had we attained no other end, we should deserve well of the churches, for having resisted the faction, personal ambition, and pique, such as have disturbed so many of your churches, and prostrated the power for good, of so many and worthy ministers. And if it may not seem presumptuous in us, in all deference, as observers of events, we venture to say, that in our opinion, it is the ease with which councils are obtained, who will sever the pastoral relation on the ground of an imbittered state of feeling, and the loss of ministerial influence, without *thoroughly inquiring into the merits of the controversy*, which has emboldened the factious, and placed the interests of the church and the pastor at the disposal of one or a few, who are determined to *rule or ruin*.

By the easy compliance of councils, the *one man power* often tyrannizes over a church, and a factious minority controls its destinies. We must therefore respectfully decline the advice you have given us. We doubt not it has been prompted by a friendly spirit. But we are confident, that no results for good would be secured sufficient to counterbalance the evil which would ensue in having this trouble all reopened, and this community agitated by the revival of hostilities. We have a work to do, and we cannot be drawn again into the arena of conflict. God is evidently blessing us; our weekly prayer meetings averaging, as they have done, *forty* the last year, our Sabbath School increasing; and the evident seriousness of mind pervading the congregation, assures us that our labor and sacrifices are not in vain in the Lord. We are greatly encouraged by the manifest tokens of Divine favor, and the delightful fellowship of

kindred minds in the harmonious meetings of the church; the elements which had *so long* disturbed its peace, and so often, being eliminated out of it, we are becoming stronger and stronger. We have no conflict with any, and we desire to be permitted unmolested, to do the work the Head of the Church has given us to do. We do not like to work on the walls of Jerusalem with the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other, and deprecating the renewal of the conflict we have had to wage, we must most respectfully decline the proposition you make us through our pastor. If any of you are embarrassed by our *status*, and the *question of our legitimacy*, we have no desire to constrain your acknowledgment, but are willing to let *time vindicate our course*, and prove that we are a church of God's own planting, and that through all the strife which we have had to endure, we have faithfully maintained the order and life of the church in its history and spirituality, from its origin in 1824 until the present time.

Respectfully submitted,
 (Signed) J. CAREW,
 GEORGE F. CAMP, } *Committee.*
 AMBROSE SNOW,

South Hadley Falls, February 3, 1862.

At the same meeting at which the above letter was presented the Association voted the following preamble and resolutions, hoping thereby to settle any dispute about statistics, and throw all the responsibility of their truthfulness upon the person to whom it belongs:

"As there have been, and still may be discrepancies between the statistics rendered by this Association and those rendered by other Associations:—

"*Resolved*, 1. That this Association consider each pastor or church clerk responsible for the accuracy of the statistical report which he furnishes to the scribe.

"2. That we hold our statistical scribe responsible only for the accuracy with which he returns to the statistical scribe of the general Association, the various reports which are furnished to him."

Even these plain words were misconstrued, and the matter had to come up again at the July meeting of the Association when it was voted that our statistics should be sent to General Association with this note appended:

"*Voted*, That, whereas the statistics rendered by Rev R. Knight

to the scribe of the Association cover certain contested matters between the two bodies in South Hadley Falls, each of which claims to be the original church organized August 12, 1824, this Association having no ecclesiastical jurisdiction over such disputed matters, expressly disclaim all responsibility as either authenticating, or denying the historical verity of the statistics aforesaid."

And this, after all, is the only ground any association has any right to take in such matters; and every well informed Congregationalist knows this, hence the appending of any such explanation or note appears to us altogether needless.

At the beginning of the present year the Lord was pleased to visit our church with a very gracious outpouring of his Spirit, and many were anxiously enquiring their way to Zion, and in due time several found peace in believing. In the very midst of this very precious season, the people at the meeting-house with their minister, called a council, *professedly* to give them advice as to what they should do with forty-three members who had not communed with them for more than two years. Now, if they claim to have jurisdiction over these members, why had they not taken the usual course with them? An ex parte council if admissible at all in Congregationalism, ought certainly never to be called together for advice, until every other means has failed. But the real intention, if not to hinder the good work going on in our church by dragging our people into the arena of strife, was no doubt to get such an expression from the council as would make it appear, to those especially, who may have been led into the folly of thinking that a council possesses some power to decide such matters, that they were really *the* church. This is also evident from the way in which truth was suppressed even in the letter missive; as we have before stated, sixty of the original members were in communion with us from the first, yet *they* put it at only forty-three in that letter. Now the names of these members have been printed in connection with our "Articles of Faith," and are therefore open to all who choose to examine; and in this village the cheat was at once detected, even by worldly men. The *purpose*, therefore, of such a misrepresentation as to numbers, is so apparent that none but the willfully blind can possibly be deceived by it. Considerable adroitness and cunning were manifested in the *manner* in which this council was composed. To outsiders it had much of the *appearance* of fairness in its composition; for the invitation was to all the church-

es in the two associations already named, and between which associations there had appeared to have been some clashing of views on the subject of our division. But this *appearance* of fairness immediately vanishes when by a careful analysis of the names of the *ministers* invited, it is found that already two-thirds of them were committed to a certain line of conduct by previous action in the matter. When the council met, it was evident that some of its members did not feel very well satisfied with its position, and one member proposed that the parties be recommended to call a mutual council composed of churches from a distance which had not had anything to do in these affairs. This of course was voted down. Then some others proposed that our pastor should be invited, this was strongly opposed by the minister and people calling the council, they were evidently afraid of seeing his face in their midst; nevertheless, the vote prevailed, and a committee was appointed to wait upon Mr. Knight. This committee called on him during the recess at noon, and he stated to them that he would consider the matter, of course expecting that they would call upon him again before the afternoon session commenced; but it appears, that so little did that committee expect that he would on so short and unreasonable a notice present himself before such a council, that they actually never called upon him for his answer. Here again, the hinge upon which the decisions of the council in the matter must turn, was women's voting:—and we can only pity, and pray for the men who so boldly stood up before that council and declared that it had not been the practice for women to vote in this church; we do sincerely hope they may be brought to repentance, and be led to seek forgiveness from the great head of the church for their deliberate falsehoods in this, as well as in several other statements which they made before the council.

This council, therefore, like preceding ones was entirely *ex parte*—all the evidence brought before it was *one sided*, and any decisions of such a council, even supposing a council to possess any power, are worth only just as much as persons may be pleased to value them at, and no more. Men of business habits and common sense, generally give them a very infinitesimal value, inasmuch as questions in dispute are always supposed to have *two* sides to them.* On this

* Is the case known in Congregationalism, where a council has been called together for the purpose of advising a church what it should do with delinquent members? And if so,—did a council ever act in the matter, if the ordinary and

subject of women's voting a *didn't see it* kind of evidence was introduced which may have had a little weight with some of the members. Letters were read from several previous pastors stating that they were not cognizant of the fact of women's voting during their pastorates. But what does such evidence amount to? If nothing of more than ordinary importance came up during their short pastorates, probably they never did see the women vote. At the most important meetings of the church, when the call or dismission of a pastor has to be decided upon, the pastor is not present, except in some uncommon case, and therefore *he could not possibly* see it. But the actual evidence of the women themselves ought to settle the matter; surely they must know better than anybody else whether they have been in the habit of voting: yet this evidence has *never* been sought by any of the ex parte councils which have been held, or it would have been given; they all seemed desirous of ignoring it altogether, apparently fearing to introduce what would so completely demolish the assumptions of the parties calling them together.

We now present certificates from women and others on this subject; and it will be seen that voting was done in the presence of some of these very pastors who have testified that they *didn't see it*. All the signers of these certificates are ready to make oath of the truthfulness of their statements.

The first is from the oldest female member in the church:

"This certifies that I have been a member of the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls from its organization, and when present, have always voted at its business meetings.

(Signed)

PAMELIA B. ATKINS.

Holyoke, April 28, 1860."

The next is a general certificate signed by seven members, each of more than twenty-five years standing in the church:

"The undersigned united with the South Church of Christ in South Hadley at the time affixed to our names, and we hereby certify that women have voted in the business meetings of the church whenever they pleased, and especially in the call and dismission of

scriptural methods of discipline had never been resorted to by said church? It appears to us that the scriptural principles of Congregationalism have been most ruthlessly violated by the assumptions of this council, inasmuch as it professed to adjudicate upon matters with which it had no right to interfere, even supposing the persons calling it to be a regularly organized church, which we deny.

pastors ; and when indifference to the privilege has been manifested, we have frequently been urged to exercise the right—especially by Deacon Bardwell :

“(Signed)

ANNA SMITH, -	-	-	May, 1825.
MARY ANN CHAPIN,	-	-	May, 1825.
SARAH B. WELD,	-	-	Nov., 1828.
ELIZA CAREW,	-	-	Nov., 1828.
LYDIA DAY,	-	-	Jan., 1829.
URSULA VINTON,	-	-	Nov., 1836.
SALLY MOODY,	-	-	Sep., 1837.

“*South Hadley Falls, July 1, 1861.*”

The following is from five members, each of more than twenty years in the church :

“We, the undersigned members of the First Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls, which organization was formerly known as the South Church in South Hadley, do testify that females have always at their pleasure (since we were members) voted in business meetings of the church. When from indifference we have not cared to remain at the business session, the male members have asked us to stay, particularly has Deacon Bardwell always been urgent that the sisters act with the church. According to the sense of the meetings we have voted by rising, raising the hand, by yea and nay, and by ballot.

“(Signed) MARY W. CAMP, MARY C. DAY,
 RACHEL COOLEY, CLARA HADLEY,
 RACHEL K. WILSON.”

We now give some individual testimonies, entering more into particulars on the subject.

“I united with the South Church of Christ in South Hadley, May 1, 1825, and I have voted many times since I became a member, by the request of the officers of the church. I voted to give Rev. Mr. Griswold a call to settle with us as our pastor, also when he was dismissed. I voted at two different times for Alonzo Bardwell to fill the office of Deacon, also for Philip Smith for the same office. I also voted for Rev. Mr. Tyler, to become our pastor, and were it not for making my statement too long, I could enumerate many other occasions on which I voted ; at times when the women were pressed to vote in consequence of the matter in hand being considered very

important, especially in some cases of discipline. And in fact, I never doubted my right to vote on all occasions, when I had a mind to do so.

ANNA E. SMITH."

"In November, 1828, I joined the (then so called) South Church in South Hadley. I have many times and whenever I pleased voted in church meetings and on church business. I have voted by rising, raising the hand, ballot, and by yea or nay. During the pastorate of the Rev. L. Thompson, I voted by ballot two different times for Dea. A. Bardwell to fill different offices. Each time I privately preferred the opposing candidate. My husband and myself advised with our pastor as to duty; he (Mr. Thompson), for the sake of peace in our families, advised us to vote as I did, for Dea. Bardwell, and I am quite sure Mr. Thompson was once present when my husband wrote a vote for me.

ELIZA CAREW."

"With regard to the voting of women in the South Church of South Hadley, I have very distinct recollections. I was often encouraged to use my right in voting in church meetings, by Dea. Bardwell. I objected, in conversations with Dea. B. in his own house, and his wife also united with me in objecting to it, but we were urged to do so as a matter of duty. I have also heard it urged upon the women frequently in the meetings; and I never heard an objection raised by any of the men to women's voting until the late unhappy troubles commenced.

WEALTHY BARTLETT."

"This certifies that I removed my relation to the church in South Hadley Falls, under the Rev. Mr. Thompson's ministry, and know it to be a fact the females of the church voted whenever they had a mind to do so. I recollect being present at a business meeting of the church soon after the Rev. R. Knight was settled over us in the ministry; he, being the moderator, stopped the proceedings of the meeting to inquire if it was customary for the females of the church to vote, and was answered by a male member that it was. I have been present when the sisters of the church have been urged to vote; I have always voted when I wished to for Sabbath School Superintendent, (chosen by the church,) and Deacon of the church. And furthermore, concerning the manner of voting, I have voted by rising in my seat, by raising the hand, and by writing the candidate's name on a piece of paper and dropping it into a man's hat for a ballot box, and by saying yea or nay, as I felt it my duty on the occasion.

MARY SNOW."

"SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, April 13, 1863.

"This is to certify that I united with the South Church in South Hadley in 1825. And that I have a very distinct remembrance with regard to the voting of women in the business of the church. Before I united, I have sometimes remained with my mother, Mrs. Deacon Chapin, in the church meetings, and have seen her vote; and after I became a member, my mother instructed me to vote as a duty; and I did so ever afterwards, whenever I pleased, and never heard the right disputed by any of the male members.

"In 1829, I removed my church relation to Buffalo, and in 1856 returned to South Hadley Falls, presenting a letter from the first Presbyterian Church in Buffalo to this church. Deacon Chapin opposed my being received, presenting a number of objections. At the church meeting where the matter was considered, he was called upon to sustain his objections if he could. At that meeting, after hearing his evidence, it was agreed that the vote should be taken by yeas and nays. The pastor was Moderator, and commenced calling over the names of the male members, omitting to call the females. Deacon Bardwell and others at once interrupted him, declaring that it was the custom for women to vote in all the business meetings of this church. Mr. Knight objected, stating that this was not the general practice, but also stated that if it was the custom here, he had nothing to say, as each church had a right to manage its own affairs.

"For the satisfaction of Mr. Knight, however, and to prevent any future question on the subject, it was moved that it be placed on record that the women do vote; this resolution was carried and the record made accordingly.

"The Rev. Mr. Smith, of Warren, was present at this meeting as my adviser, and can confirm this statement.

MARY A. CHAPIN."

"I, Rachel Cooley, testify that I was present when the resolution was adopted disapproving of dancing; I saw the females vote, but refused my vote, as I had attended the dance, and it is a grief to me now.

RACHEL COOLEY."

"During the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Tyler, I was present and voted with the females respecting recommending certain of our members to the Methodist Church to which some objected.

URSULA VINTON."

"I hereby certify that I was a member of the South Church in

South Hadley several years and have a distinct recollection that women voted at all business meetings of the church whenever they pleased—this they did by rising, and holding up the hands.

THEODORE BELLOWS."

"SOUTH HADLEY FALLS, March 7, 1863.

"This is to certify that I have been a member of the South Church of South Hadley nearly twenty-five years, and that it has been the practice of women to vote, and that I have seen the females vote by rising, raising the hand, and by ballot. When the Rev. Mr. Tyler was pastor, I know the females voted. When the Rev. Mr. Thompson was pastor the females did vote by ballot, for I wrote votes for them, and saw that they deposited the ballots in a hat or box, and were counted, and Mr. Thompson knew it for I consulted with him upon the subject. I also certify that Deacon Bardwell stated in a business meeting soon after Rev. Mr. Knight came here that it was *the custom for females to vote in this church*, and insisted that the women should vote; and to *prevent any future question* upon female voting, he moved that it be put upon record, and it was so recorded. I also certify that females did vote at a meeting, called to see if the church would retain or dismiss the Rev. Mr. Knight; and that Mr. Knight's female opponents did vote, and that the men never objected till after they found themselves in the minority. J. CAREW."

On this subject the Rev. S. S. Smith, late of Warren, also writes:

"WAUKESHA, WIS., March 4, 1863.

"DEAR BRO. KNIGHT: In reply to yours of the 29th ult., I would say confidently, that not only at the trial concerning Mrs. Chapin, did I learn distinctly from Deacon Bardwell, that it was a rule in that church for women to vote, but also at other times, and often have I heard the same from him, and from others in the church, so that the fact of women voting in the church at South Hadley Falls, seemed to me to stand out palpable before Israel and the sun, a question that could not be controverted.

I am, yours in Christian love,

S. S. SMITH."

Many more testimonies of a similar character could be introduced were it not for making our statement too lengthy. We think it

right however to place in this "statement" the testimony of our pastor on the subject of the record upon which so much stress has been laid by our opponents, and which has been so persistently and so wickedly wrested from its original meaning.

"I hereby certify that at a church meeting held a few months after my settlement in South Hadley Falls, a demand was made for the yeas and nays on the decision of the subject matter then under consideration ; and that I, as moderator, commenced calling over the names of the *men* who sat before me, but omitted the *women*. As soon as this was discovered, Dea. Bardwell and others interrupted me by saying that it was the custom for the women to vote in the business meetings of this church. I stated that this was not the *general* practice of Congregational churches, but that as a Congregational church is altogether independent as to the management of its own internal affairs, I, of course, could not interfere. But seeing my hesitancy, Dea. Bardwell moved that it be put on record that the women *do* vote, to prevent, as he said, any future question on the subject ; and the record of such fact was duly made in my own handwriting, as clerk of the church. This very record is now brought forward as a proof that the voting of women was then first commenced, and that therefore it is a thing which altogether belongs to the period of my own ministry. A greater and meaner perversion of facts can scarcely be conceived, and yet men and even ministers have been found who have readily given credence to the lie.

RICHARD KNIGHT."

In the opinion of a leading lawyer in this State, who is cognizant of the evidence now produced, our case is made out, and would readily insure a verdict in our favor in any court of law in the United States. On the *voting* majority of the church in legal meeting assembled, we therefore base our claim to be *the* church in South Hadley Falls, which now, by its own vote, is called the "First Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls." As to the numerical or *actual* majority of members, with this we have nothing to do ; although we believe that even here, on a righteous analysis, we should not fail. The members were very nearly balanced at the time of the division ; for family reasons a few remained professedly neutral, and for the same reasons are now ranged on the side of our opponents, although *we know* their hearts are with us still. But as to

where the *moral* and *working* power of the church is, no unbiased person in this neighborhood has any doubt. But the church in its organic form, we assert, continued with its pastor, who was its only legal moderator, and who alone had authority to convene its members for church business; and as has been argued in a similar case to ours, even *had* a majority of the members of the church separated themselves from him and the regularly organized body thus remaining with him, and over which he continued to preside in his official capacity, yet they, the majority, would not have constituted *the church*. They could not, with any show of propriety, have claimed any authority to act as such, or to do any business whatever in the name of the church. The same reasoning applies to town or school district meetings; when legally called, they are the only lawfully existing bodies for transacting the public business of the town or district, even though only one half of the voters should attend. So it is and ever must be in the church, or the door is thrown open to every kind of change and oppression. Men can go around to individuals, as we have too painful proof in this case, and by cajoling, threatening and misrepresentation, easily obtain an array of names.

We have taken our stand upon the pure principles and polity of Congregationalism, viz: "the completeness and independence of each local church in its organization, government, and mode of worship," having full power to "regulate its own concerns" without interference from other churches, either in their individual capacity, or collectively in ecclesiastical councils. If for this we are to suffer, we are willing to bear it; hoping to see a brighter day, when the churches opposing us will return to a purer, more orderly, and more scriptural system.

By vote of the church,

GEORGE F. CAMP,	}	<i>Deacons.</i>
AMBROSE SNOW,		
JOSEPH CAREW,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
HENRY H. JUDD,		
ELIJAH MATTHEWS,		

South Hadley Falls, April 20, 1863.

NOTE.—For the information of our friends, it may be well to state, that twenty-two members have been added to our church since the division in 1860, and twenty-nine have been propounded for ad-

mission to the church at the next communion, (May 3d.) These added to the sixty resident members remaining with us when the dissatisfied members commenced to meet separately, make one hundred and eleven, which after deducting ten for removals and deaths, leave one hundred and one resident members now in our church, or thirty-five more than there were in the whole church when Mr. Knight commenced his labors here in 1856.





**This book should be returned to
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.**

**A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.**

Please return promptly.

US 13456.10
A statement of facts, concerning th
Widener Library 005843813



3 2044 086 373 495